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Editor: LILLIAN B. LAWLER, Hunter College, New York, N. Y.

Associate Editor: W. L. CARR, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Business Manager: DOROTHY PARK LATTA, New York University, Washington Square East, New York, N. Y.

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Gethsemane et Mons Olivarum

JOHN ERSKINE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

By NORMAN W. DEWITT

Victoria College, Toronto, Canada

The pitfalls that await a man of letters in writing discursively about another civilization are fairly numerous, and Mr. John Erskine has found his quota of them in discussing the topic of education in the New York Times Magazine for January 29th. His title is, *Education: The Greeks Had a Technique For It*. Since in publishing an article a writer virtually addresses a letter to the public, it may be pardonable if I rehearse the weaker arguments in his treatment for the benefit of teachers of Latin and Greek.

In the first place, it is rather unlucky that Mr. Erskine is chiefly concerned about the teaching of languages. So far from possessing a technique for this art the Greeks did not think it worth while. Their attitude toward language study was that of two Englishmen who established a plantation in an out-of-the-way corner of Arabia. When a roving stranger sought them out to find an interpreter they explained: "We don't try to learn their language; we make the bally rascals learn English." It was no accident that Greek became the common tongue of the Ancient East. The Greeks looked upon all foreigners as "stutterers," which happens to be the meaning of "barbarians."

Mr. Erskine writes: "The Romans later invented the side-

line idea of culture, and what they—and we after them—call liberal studies." Here it may be objected that a knowledge of Greek was no side-line to Caesar and Cicero. They learned Greek for the purpose of speaking it. This was inevitable, because the best Greek teachers did not think it worth while to learn Latin. Roman education was essentially bilingual; it was necessarily so.

If a knowledge of Greek was no side-line to Cicero, what about the term "liberal studies?" So far from being invented by the Romans, this expression was merely a translation of various Greek phrases. Moreover, if these studies were practical for the Greeks, why not for the Romans also? If the lad who takes a swimming lesson expects to swim—one of Mr. Erskine's comparisons—did not the young student in Rome go straight home, after listening to orators in the forum, to practice his declamations? The objective was immediate and practical, participation in public life, and it was the same continuously throughout Graeco-Roman civilization.

As Mr. Erskine would have it, athletics also became a side-line with the Roman: "The slaves took the exercise for him." This statement is sufficient to wrinkle the face of the most saturnine. The prosperous Roman was so devoted to his daily exercise that he always provided for it in his architecture, and the layout of the private house was in large part determined by this need. Even Cicero was careful to keep his body in repair and mentions the adverse reaction upon

his health when the exercises were omitted of necessity. The Romans were especially addicted to equestrian exercises, and Caesar among the foremost. Finally, it may be asked, is it conceivable that the legionaries who swept so victoriously through Greece and Asia were the product of no training? The Roman soldier was no midget crouching behind a machine gun. His weapons were a sword, a spear, and a spade, which are useless without a well-developed shoulder and biceps.

Mr. Erskine has possibly been misled by the fuss that the Greeks made over their athletics. He reminds us that they took their athletics very seriously; their physical training was linked up with religion. Yet let us consider Olympia. How few were competing and what multitudes were looking on? Moreover, what multitudes frequented Olympia to sell trinkets to the crowds and to purvey the ancient equivalent of hot dogs? The Greeks stressed the innocence of the competitions in their great athletic meets; the prizes were mere palm leaves, or crowns of wild olive or of poplar. Yet what of the towns that brought themselves near to bankruptcy by voting pensions and gorgeous celebrations for the returning heroes? There is more than one way to professionalize sports. The Romans never fell into such follies; they exercised for health, not for show and competition.

Let us return, however, to the analogy of the boy and the swimming lesson. It is extremely suggestive. The swimming lesson is no academic performance; the boy expects to swim. Now, if Greek technique is being recommended, what was the young man expected to do after taking a lecture in metaphysics from Aristotle? Was he expecting at once to metaphysic? This, we admit, may be captious, but we follow the *logos*, which is Greek technique. What was the young man to do who took a lecture from Plato in politics? Was it not Plato who refused to participate in political life? Politics was to him, though not to Caesar, "a side-line of culture." It was his great achievement to divorce for the first time the marriage of political thinking with political action. When he published the first blueprint of a paper republic, he taught to men the technique of breeding ideas that cannot be translated into action. He became the father of all the -isms that vex the modern world. Plato substituted for the wet swimming lesson a dry exercise on a machine in a mental gymnasium.

Mr. Erskine is clever; we all know it. He often reveals the knack of throwing his ideas into shapes that remain in the memory. He says that "no language is a dead language unless you kill it." This is strikingly true and we shall treasure it for quotation, but, like a smart lawyer who is more bent upon scoring points with the jury than convincing the judge, he associates this aphorism with a mouldy fallacy. Speaking of the art of catching and holding the reader's attention, he writes: "There is no mystery about it; a vigorous newspaper editor will knock it into your head in a few weeks." Yes, but Mr. Erskine knows as well as any that the said editor possesses the privilege of choosing from among innumerable applicants the candidate whose head shall be so treated. He is aware also that the said editor is at liberty to fire the cub reporter if he proves dumb, indifferent, or intractable. In Toronto, where I write, only one cub out of fifty is said to become a permanent member of the newspaper profession. Allow the teacher of English the privilege of rejecting forty-nine out of fifty, and the results might be comparable.

The same fallacy underlies the allegation that athletics is the only branch that is well taught, which Mr. Erskine chooses to revive. Everyone knows that the coach can bar a man from the team who smokes a couple of cigarettes. Besides, he is in a preferred position from another angle. If he chooses to exercise his authority, no indignant parents bear down upon the institution to create a tumult in college offices. The ordinary instructor is handicapped on all sides.

It is drawn to our attention that languages are properly

taught upon the continent of Europe. I agree. I once knew a boy of ten years who spoke four languages besides his own. He was selling picture postcards on the street in Rome. He had been taught in a school where boys were trained for this purpose. In the course of time he would become a licensed guide or a hotel porter. He would not be educated. If he attained culture it would be a triumph of personality. Foreign immigrants, who are also mentioned, learn English in this country with equal speed and avidity. Yet how rarely is a Michael Pupin or a Felix Frankfurter found among them? These comparisons are futile, though saddening. It is impossible to duplicate in the average classroom the conditions of a European slum or Ellis Island. Poverty is a unique spur.

Mr. Erskine writes: "I know from experience that you cannot read a language unless you speak it." This is rather too much. Have we not all heard of Helen Keller? Have we all been deceived about the education of those who lack the gift of speech?

About other subjects of instruction, such as sociology, history, and economics, Mr. Erskine writes that "a Greek, if he could see us teach them, would think us crazy." Well, there were plenty of Greeks who entertained an equally low opinion of Greek education in their own day. Epicurus said there were two kinds of discussion, one about words and the other about realities. He was hitting at Plato, whom he ironically called "the golden." If Mr. Erskine is "no friend of classroom dialectic," then he is no friend of Plato, who was the greatest master of it, and his veneration of the Greek technique is no more than the fascination of a shibboleth.

Let us not be deceived or dismayed by such a sportive extravaganza of smart quips as Mr. Erskine has assembled for us. I doubt whether he is really in earnest. We cannot fairly compare cultural studies with swimming. Boys and girls learn to swim with eagerness, but they do not mow the lawn or make the beds with equal alacrity, though both of these are good exercises. It is absurd to demand that all our objectives should be immediate. Even Plato, if we are to follow the Greeks, required of all matriculants a knowledge of geometry as a prerequisite for ethics, politics, and philosophy. His objective was a long-range one. Some of our objectives are bound to be in this class. Lastly, we have no choice but to carry on without the privileges possessed by newspaper editors and football coaches, doing our best for pupils who for the most part lack the incentives of the poor of European cities.

IT HAPPENED IN A LATIN CLASS

BY MILDRED DEAN

Supervisor of Latin, Washington, D. C.

(Note:—For the last seven years the public schools of the District of Columbia have shown a steadily mounting enrollment in Latin. The official figures for Nov. 1, 1938, show an increase of 39.6 per cent over those of Nov. 1, 1931—an increase greater than that of the school population of the city as a whole. Since this striking growth has taken place largely under the supervision of Miss Mildred Dean, teachers the country over will be interested in her ideas on the teaching of Latin.)

The teacher was gracious, gentle, and courageous. She had the full confidence and cooperation of the beginning class, yet they were having a great deal of difficulty getting started in Latin. Their "work sheets," as they called the homework papers they had brought dutifully to class, showed the most astonishing ignorance of all the endings she had tried so ingeniously and energetically to get fastened into their minds. Their little tests were appalling.

"Now, come," she said with a cheerfulness she was far from feeling, "let us go over our verb endings again. When I

say the ending, you answer in chorus the person and number. Now! The ending -o or -m?

Silence from the class, and uncomfortable glances.

The teacher prompted, "First person singular!" and the class chorused cheerfully, "First person singular!"

Teacher. "The ending -s?"

Class. "Second person singular."

Teacher. "The ending -t?"

Class. "Third person singular."

Teacher. "The ending -mus?"

Class. "Fourth person singular."

Teacher. "No, no! First person plural!"

After a few more rounds of rehearsal, they learned to change to "First person plural" at the proper part of the song. But they still had not the faintest idea why "First person plural" had to be said instead of "Fourth person singular."

Now, if the teacher had said, "When I give the ending, you tell me who does the action," and the class had learned to answer "I," "You," and so on, one-half of the time and effort would have set the class on the right track.

"But," you protest, "then the class would not learn the meaning of 'person' and 'number.'" You are wrong. The next day, when someone makes a mistake in a personal ending, the teacher will ask for a question from some other pupil that will help the blunderer to change. The need for the technical term "person" or "number" will arise. Perhaps the questioner will ask, "How many people performed that action?" The teacher will prompt, "Singular number, or plural number?" The name will come quickly enough after the concept of person and number in grammar is clear.

We have to remember that both "person" and "number" are among the five hundred commonest words in our language, and that both of them were learned in the child's earliest days at school, with meanings very remote from the grammar meanings. "Number" means to a child arabic figures of all sorts on paper and on the board, with strong memories of difficulties in subtraction, fractions, interest, superadded. "Person" means another human being. The Latin teacher has to use words already in the children's vocabulary, and already packed with meaning not unmixed with emotional recollections. To all this she has to add other and special conceptions.

The solution for us is to present the concept to the children before we try to use the technical term. But that means a new and very keen variety of thinking on the teacher's part. We must avoid confusions by anticipating them. We must interpret from surface happenings the misunderstandings that arise, and correct them by use of forms rather than by memory work.

LATIN—LITERATURE OR SOCIAL SCIENCE?

By ALLEN E. WOODALL

Northern State Teachers College, Aberdeen, South Dakota

To a layman the present controversy about Latin—as, indeed, all controversies about Latin from the Middle Ages on—is very confusing. Originally the thing was simple according to the old educational theory, which lasted well into the nineteenth century. Latin was unquestionably a part of the traditional cultural education. If a man knew Latin he was educated; without it he belonged to the great uncultivated. Latin was a mysterious touchstone.

This attitude was bound to break down under the impact of popular education. It did. For a while Latin had a place in the "faculty psychology" which assumed the brain to be a compartmentalized organ, divided into sections or faculties, such as reason, memory, imagination, and the like. Various traditional subjects were supposed to develop these separate faculties, much as dumbbell and setting-up exercises developed different muscles. Nowadays we have forgotten which of the

faculties each of these subjects was supposed to develop, but we seem to recollect that mathematics had something to do with the reason and history with the memory. Latin and the other languages, also, did their part in these mental calisthenics. But the "faculty psychology" has been tossed overboard.

The present theory of education assumes a series of social objectives, which are to create a "many-sided personality." There is no doubt that, judging the value of Latin literature strictly by these canons, Vergil would show up much better than Caesar's *Gaulic War*, which might be re-entitled "My Own Personal and Heroic Conquest of Gaul, and Why They Let Me Do It" (not to mention how his conquest bogged down in Britain); or Cicero's reactionary and one-sided diatribe against his personal political enemies implicated in Catiline's abortive revolution. But even Vergil presents unexpected difficulties to a teacher who attempts to make the *Aeneid* contribute to the social objectives.

Among the most questionable of the supposed virtues fostered by the social scientist are "patriotism" and "hero worship." In the light of what is currently happening in Europe, it appears that these may develop definitely anti-social and destructive traits. It is essential to point out to the student of Latin literature, not only the great similarities to modern situations, but the even more important, though much less apparent, dissimilarities. Many of the most obvious points of resemblance and difference, alike, are very obvious and non-essential. It is easy and pointless to show that the Roman travelled joltingly and slowly in a chariot or on horseback, while we glide with the wind in hundred-horsepower cars. Still the differences are related to the physical facts of the two worlds, and the similarities are dependent upon similar needs and similar dreams of humankind.

The Roman lived in a world where actual democracy was relatively impossible if he was to have the luxuries to which he was accustomed. What mechanical contrivances supply today, had to be supplied then by slave labor. The wars of those times, which were judged inevitable, had for one purpose the supplying of slaves. The cities were not commercial but political centers, and were essentially non-productive. Augustus thus found that the inevitable concentration of a parasitic population in the cities actually impoverished the land. Vergil became a benevolent Minister of Propaganda to send the people back to the farms from which came the only real wealth of the state. Vergil built his hero, Aeneas, as an epitome of the virtues then popular, and related the life of the hero to Greek legend in order to link Roman destiny with the only civilization in that part of the world that could boast a continuous tradition from the period of the Trojan War.

The actual greatness of the poet Vergil is as intangible as the greatness of any of the other poets who have left us imperishable thoughts. Anyone who loves the beauty and essential truth of his poetry will agree that his cry of "Sunt lacrimae rerum" is the heart of his appeal and his message. Vergil was a sensitive and understanding soul who looked with almost divine vision and compassion upon the ever-present sight of human love and longing beating itself to death on the rocks of prejudice, cruelty, and adamant facts beyond human adjustment. These are the "tears of things." Vergil was a civilized man, and as such comes nearer to us than many poets of the Middle Ages, or many poets of today who are remote from human sympathy and blinded by prejudices.

Vergil, then, should be studied as a poet of humanity. His works, and those of the other writers in the Latin courses as well, should be handled as literature, as expressions of the life and aspirations of the age in which they were written—not as textbooks of social or scientific theory.

Send at least one Latin student on to college Latin, somewhere, every year.—Lillian Gay Berry.

ROMA QUADRATA

By CHARLES C. MIEROW

Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.

(Note:—I am indebted to Professor Hadzsits' remarks at Philadelphia at the American Philological Association banquet a year ago for the idea of the last stanza.—C. C. M.)

R O M A
O R A M
M A R O
A M O R

ROMA aeterna, ancient home,
Eternal City of mankind,
Your pines, your fountains, and your tombs
Adorn a country of the mind.

ORAM—O Shore of Italy!
Entrancing mind and heart and soul;
Surrounded by the wine-dark sea—
Caieta's tomb, Aeneas' goal!

O City of the Seven Hills,
Where MARO sang his deathless song,
Here would I tarry, here delay;
Here all who love the Past belong!

AMOR is but your name, it seems,
As we let fall a backward glance
Upon those storied ways and walls
Surviving blows of time and chance.

SOME DURABLE SATISFACTIONS OF CLASSICAL STUDY

By ANNA P. MACVAY

Dean, Wadleigh High School, New York City

A pedagogical notion, widespread but fallacious, asserts that time spent on Latin and Greek is wasted, because they will soon be overlaid by more important matters, and forgotten. Hence the opponents of cultural studies commonly advise a student to choose only courses that may be useful in the vocation which he expects to follow. Yet they applaud the farmer who sows his field to clover and later plows it under, because it enriches the crop that follows it. We maintain that in like fashion classical training fertilizes the mind.

The student who pursues the humanities along with the so-called practical subjects of the curriculum might be compared to the architect who puts windows in all sides of his building, some that overlook the highways of commerce and others that command far-reaching views. Even a modicum of Latin and Greek affords its possessor an opening in what would otherwise be a blind wall.

In his speech in defense of the poet Archias, Cicero emphasizes the never-failing recreation that the tired business man may find in good literature, especially poetry. Addressing the prosecutor, he says: "You ask why I delight so much in this man. Because he furnishes wherewith I am refreshed after the din of the forum, and my ears, weary with its wrangling, grow rested. Do you suppose I could have what I express daily in so great variety of affairs if I did not cultivate my mind with study, or endure so great strain without this relaxation?"

In defending his great fondness for reading, to which he devotes the leisure that other men spend on social affairs, he utters his famous encomium on the companionship of letters: "Other pleasures are not of all times and ages and places. These pursuits nourish youth, delight old age, adorn prosperity, provide a refuge and solace in adversity, entertain at

home, are no hindrance abroad, are with us at night, on journeys, and in the country."

The classics which this thesis defends include music and every work of art that is a recognized standard of excellence, though our attention at present is centered on the productions of Greek and Roman genius.

Masterpieces of English delight the reader to whom their allusions are not obscure. If he does not comprehend them at once, he knows where to seek for further enlightenment. Someone has said, "A reward of culture is the ability to read Milton with enjoyment." To recognize the classic treasures embedded in Tennyson, Browning, Lowell, and a host of other authors is a perennial spring of ennobling pleasure.

Acquaintance with ancient symbolism, frequently employed in cartoons and advertisements, and appreciation of other references to things classical in newspapers and magazines, make current literature more interesting. One smiles with enjoyment as he reads an editorial in the *New York Times*, headed "Music by Aristophanes?" which comments on the frog-jumping contest in honor of Mark Twain's centennial, when a hundred frogs were brought by aeroplane from Louisiana to New York. The editor slyly makes a reference to Connecticut, "where Yale men still raise the tribal chorus;" and we seem to hear again the croaking cry, "Brekekekex Koax Koax," of the Frogs in Athenian comedy.

Another satisfaction to a lover of language is the steady growth of his vocabulary and of his power of discrimination in the use of words. To note derivations is a never-ending pastime. That *supercilious* implies lifting an "eyebrow," that *cynical* suggests a snarling "dog," that *nuptials* refers to the bride's "veil"—these are entertaining bits of verbal history. A professor of chemistry in a polytechnic school told me that he wished all his students had had at least a year of Greek to enable them to use an English dictionary with understanding.

Apart from knowledge of the Bible, nothing so helps a visitor to appreciate art galleries and museums as do ancient history and mythology. On all sides he sees statues, vases, tapestries, coins, paintings, which portray classical subjects. Examples without number could be cited, not only in European centers but throughout America. Schools, colleges, libraries, and other public and private buildings are adorned with murals and insignia employing ancient symbols. Ability to read inscriptions in Latin and Greek is the open sesame to much of art and archaeology.

Keeping up one's Greek by reading the New Testament often brings satisfaction to men and women whose daily occupations may be far removed from the cloister. That this is the habit of a magnate of the business world, well known in Wall Street, I learned by chance one Sunday at vespers in a metropolitan church. The usher had given me a seat alone in a pew. To whom it belonged was plain from the name on the service books. One not so marked attracted my notice. It was a well-worn copy of Westcott and Hort's *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, and on the fly-leaf was the owner's autograph. Turning the pages, I found many marginal memoranda of dates and clergymen's names beside passages which presumably they had used in sermons to which he had listened.

The narratives of the Gospels and the more difficult language of the Epistles sometimes yield beauties not conveyed in the best English renderings. A correspondent once wrote me of a happy find which he had just made in the First Epistle of Peter (v, 10). The verse which the King James Version translates, "God make you perfect!" has the same verb that Matthew uses for "mending nets" (Mat. iv, 21). The old fisherman Peter, knowing that successful "fishers of men" must have first-rate tackle, utters in their behalf the pious wish, "God mend your nets!"

Another passage which upon close examination yields still greater satisfaction is Mark's account (vi, 30-44) of Christ's

feeding of the Five Thousand. All the Evangelists tell the story, but Mark surpasses them in picturesque details. The commonly accepted version, "He commanded them to make all sit down in companies upon the green grass; and they sat down in ranks," fails to convey all the charm of the original. The words literally mean, "He commanded them to make all sit down, festive parties, festive parties . . . and they sat down, flower-beds, flower-beds." The iteration emphasizes the lovely metaphors. Mark has an artist's eye. He alone mentions the color of the grass. To him the picnic groups clad in bright garments, such as are common in the Orient, look like beds of flowers on the greensward. An unforgettable picture!

The mention of flowers reminds me of an enthusiastic acquaintance whose hobby is gardening. She once confessed that she found difficulty in remembering which were the *perennials*. "Don't you know which ones persist from year to year?" I asked. "Oh! Are they the perennials?" As we strolled along the path, I commented on the appropriateness of some floral names, such as the *nasturtium*, the pungent odor of which "twists your nose," the *gladiolus*, which has foliage like "small swords," and the *hydrangea*, which is a very "water-pot" in its capacity for moisture. Delighted with these bits of information, she begged for more. So I mentioned *hyacinth*, *narcissus*, and *peony*, and told of the legendary youths whose names are thus perpetuated. Also I spoke of the curious mutations that time has wrought in names like *daffodil* from *asphodel*, and *currants* from *Corinth*.

My hostess sighed, "Oh, if only I had studied Latin! Then I might understand the labels my gardener puts beside the plants, and the scientific names in books." "Yes," I replied, "Linnaeus, the father of modern botany, used Latin because it is the international language of scholars. Every herbarium is catalogued in Latin."

The fact is that agriculture, arboriculture, horticulture, floriculture are not the only "cultures" in debt both to science and to the classics. These two grand divisions of knowledge have no rational grounds for antagonism. The scientist and the humanist as co-laborers should respect each other.

One of the most important assets derivable from extensive reading of the classics is ability to judge excellence or mediocrity or inferiority in modern literature and art. First-hand acquaintance with great originals gives the critic a real perspective. His standards are not second-hand, and he generalizes from a wide range.

The drama is a fruitful field from which to draw illustrations. The two Dromios in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* repeat the amusing situations of the *Menaechmi* of Plautus. Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* presupposes familiarity with the *Iphigenia in Tauris* of Euripides. Stephen Phillips has gloriously dramatized Ulysses, that age-old yet ever-youthful hero. French dramatists of the seventeenth century took plots from the Greek, much as Roman poets had done eighteen centuries before. Such borrowings are justifiable, because they do not dishonor their prototypes.

But the use of names of ancient heroines to advertise doubtful works of art is reprehensible. Modern instances of this are Erskine's *Private Life of Helen of Troy* and O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. One wonders what an audience, unacquainted with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, gets from *Mourning Becomes Electra*. It is a distressing sex-play, laid in New England at the close of the Civil War. Despite the playwright's use of thinly disguised names, his characters have little in common with those they imitate; and his play lacks the majesty of ancient tragedies, which portray elemental passions, pride, and lust, overpowered by filial loyalty, and vengeance in an age when blood-feuds were sanctioned because society had not yet established courts of justice.

To help realize the debt we owe to the Greeks and Romans in the understanding and just interpretation of literary and

artistic phenomena, we have only to imagine ourselves bereft of the knowledge of their masterpieces.

A peculiar satisfaction comes to those of us who at any time have taught the classical languages, in seeing our students attain success and even eminence in literature and archaeology. But teachers are not the only ones who reap this joy. Parents, older friends, and sometimes casual acquaintances, even if they have little or no classical training, can encourage the young to begin studying Latin and Greek and to pursue them in spite of difficulties until they secure the benefits that grow greater with time. In response to the popular cry for vocational guidance let us not hesitate to recommend to students the abiding values that come from time and energy spent on cultural subjects that will help them both to make a living and to enjoy life. We who already have these intellectual treasures should heed the exhortation, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

MINIATURE OBJECTS IN ANTIQUITY AND TODAY

By EUGENE S. McCARTNEY

University of Michigan

The passion for constructing things that excel all others of their kind in magnitude is natural to man. The biggest gun, the largest boat, and the tallest building elicit pride and boasts and win columns of space in newspapers, but man likes to show his skill in working on a small scale also. Phidias, for example, sculptured in bronze a cicada, a bee, and a fly so realistic that they seemed to be living (Julian, *Letter 67*). Other men of both ancient and modern times have made objects far smaller than their models.

During the last few years I have clipped from Detroit newspapers a number of articles about miniature objects and also several illustrations of them. Some notice of a few of these curiosities may be warranted in a classical publication because they can be aptly compared with similar ones described by Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, vii. 85 (cf. Solinus, i, 100), and Plutarch, *Moralia*, 1083E, and because they tend incidentally to lessen the "tallness" of some of the stories recorded by these two authors and others. Pliny's account is a little more detailed than Plutarch's.

Pliny tells us that a certain Callicrates, working in ivory, made ants and other animals so small that the various parts of their bodies were indistinguishable one from another. He says, too, that Myrmecides fashioned of the same material a chariot that could be covered by the wings of a fly and a ship that could be concealed by the wings of a bee. Elsewhere (xxxvi. 43) he gives marble as the material and states that the driver of the chariot was included.

These minute carvings of Myrmecides are mentioned by Varro in his *De Lingua Latina*, vii. 1 (cf. ix. 108). He compares a method of clearing up the meaning of obscure poetic words to that of making the details of Myrmecides' works distinct by putting dark hair behind them as a background.

Another small object, wrought by a gem-cutter named Phidias, who lived in the third century B.C., was a figure of Alexander hunting on horseback, which was not larger than a fingernail. "Yet the marvellous skill of the workmanship is so lavished on every detail that Alexander at one and the same time strikes his quarry and intimidates the spectator, scaring him by his whole bearing, while the horse, reared on the very tips of his hoofs, is about to take a step and leave the pedestal, and by creating the illusion of vigorous action is endowed with movement by the artist's skill." (W. C. Wright's translation of *The Letters of Julian*, 67, in *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, Vol. III, p. 225, in "The Loeb Classical Library." For the identity of the gem-cutter see page 224.)

An excellent modern example of the miniaturist's tech-

nique is illustrated in *The Detroit Free Press* of January 23, 1938. The world's smallest violin, which is just one and one-half inches long, is shown being held in the palm of a hand. The maker spent twelve hundred hours on it.

My most recent clipping, an Associated Press dispatch which appeared in *The Ann Arbor News* of February 17, 1939, describes a miniature object of interest to science: "A model locomotive so tiny it can be hidden behind half a safety match went on display today at the Franklin Institute [in Philadelphia]. The midget was carved from a single piece of aluminum by Adelbert S. Boyer of Reading, Pa. The details must be studied through a powerful microscope to be appreciated."

Among a collection of 25,800 miniatures gathered by a sailor while seeing the world in the United States Navy are "carved camels which can go through the eye of an ordinary needle and a bound Bible which just covers a postage stamp" (*The Detroit Free Press*, January 30, 1938). I have also read that Japanese artisans can construct needles so small that they may be put within other needles.

Obviously Elizabeth Goudge based on observation of real life the following sentences from her novel, *A City of Bells*, page 252: "On the stand stood every kind of miniature object that Mary had been able to collect throughout her life. There were tiny chains carved out of ivory, a Bible the size of your thumb-nail which would be actually read with a magnifying glass, a silk purse with tiny coins inside, a tea-set of Bristol china, a bottle of shells the size of pins' heads, a little telescope through which you could look and see a picture of Brighton, and many other treasures, thirty of them altogether, all of them works of art and not a single one of them bigger than an acorn."

One of the favorite feats of "microtechnicians" has been the writing of many words in small compass. The craftsman Myrmecides, whom I have already mentioned, is said by Plutarch (*loc. cit.*) to have engraved verses of Homer on sesame seeds, but in i. 17 of Aelian's *Varia Historia*, which in places is somewhat variant as well as *varia*, no distinction is made between the feats of Myrmecides and those of Callicrates. Aelian states that it was elegiac distichs which they inscribed on sesame seeds and that they wrote in golden letters. He thinks that no man of good judgment would praise skill so futile.

Myrmecides did, in fact, become a laughingstock, and there was a facetious saying about "Myrmecides rivaling the art of Phidias" (Julian, *Oration III*, 112A; Suidas, s. vv. *geloios*, *Murmekiden*, and *Pheidias*). Not all the ancients belittled Myrmecides, however, as we may see from the words of Cicero (*Academica Priora*, ii. 38, 120): *Cuius [=dei] quidem maiestatem deducitis usque ad apium formicarumque perfectionem ut etiam inter deos Myrmecides aliquis minutorum opusculorum fabricator fuisse videatur.*

With the achievement of Myrmecides in engraving verses on sesame seeds we may compare the writing of the name "The Detroit News" on a grain of rice, which was shown greatly magnified in *The Detroit News* of October 21, 1934. For eleven years the "professor" who did this work "has been going 'round writing people's names and addresses on grains of rice, engraving the Lord's prayer on the head of a pin, writing on hair, writing on the edge of cards, and doing other small writing jobs."

On December 12, 1926, the same newspaper published in the rotogravure section a picture of a man examining with a microscope a postal card on the back of which he had written 16,700 words.

Pliny quotes Cicero as saying (evidently in a lost work) that Homer was written on a membrane and enclosed in a nut. On October 23, 1932, the Feature-Fiction Section of *The Detroit News* showed a Bible resting in the middle of the owner's hand. The caption reads as follows: "His tiny Bible was printed in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1895. The dimen-

sions of it are, approximately, 19 millimeters high, 12 millimeters wide, and 6 millimeters thick. The printed pages are actually less than half the size of an ordinary postage stamp. The Bible contains 520 pages, is printed in two-column style, and it takes a powerful lens to read it."

In a rather recent catalog of old books I found the following advertisement: "Seven tiny books, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Omar, Atlas, etc., smallest size 1 by 1½ inches, largest 1¾ by 2 inches."

Readers whose credulity has been taxed by these records will be interested in the latest appraisal of Pliny's words about Homer "in a nutshell": *In nuce inclusam Iliadem Homeri carmen in membrana scriptum tradit Cicero.* A lengthy discussion of the significance of this brief sentence may be found in an article by Professor Henry A. Sanders, "The Beginnings of the Modern Book," *Michigan Alumnus: Quarterly Review*, XLIV (1938), 103-104. Professor Sanders concludes that Cicero had seen a copy of the entire *Iliad* written on parchment, and holds that, since *nux* may mean "nut tree" as well as "nut," *in nuce* may refer to the wooden boards of the binding. He adduces as a parallel our usage, "of walnut."

From the ancient records of miniature objects it can be seen that the attainment of minuteness did not have to await the modern refinement of tools. The chief requirements were patience and microscopic vision, as they are today. Pliny remarks concerning the keenness of eyesight of those who made the objects he describes: *Oculorum acies vel maxime fidem excedentia invenit exempla.*

CHRISTUS RESURREXIT

Una autem sabbati valde diluculo venerunt ad monumentum, portantes, quae paraverant, aromata: et invenerunt lapidem revolutum a monumento. Et ingressae non invenerunt corpus Domini Jesu. Et factum est, dum mente consternatae essent de isto, ecce duo viri steterunt secus illas in veste fulgenti. Cum timerent autem et declinarent vultum in terram, dixerunt ad illas: Quid quaeritis viventem cum mortuis? Non est hic, sed surrexit: recordamini qualiter locutus est vobis, cum adhuc in Galilaea esset, dicens: Quia oportet filium hominis tradi in manus hominum peccatorum, et crucifigi, et die tertia resurgere. Et recordatae sunt verborum eius. Et regressae a monumento nuntiaverunt haec omnia illis undecim, et ceteris omnibus.—*Evangelium secundum Lucam*, xxiv, 1-9.

HAVE YOU TRIED THIS?

An Easter Program

Many Latin clubs find that they can work up an Easter program of great interest to the school and to the community by making use of a mediaeval "morality" play, or a modern play of similar type, or even tableaux accompanied by readings from the Latin Bible. In *Plays and Songs for Latin Clubs*, by D. N. Robinson (one dollar a copy, from Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio), pages 11-19, appears "Christus Triumphator, an Easter Morality Play," with songs for a chorus representing angels. Parts of a liturgical play of the tenth century—enough for a twenty-minute performance—are given in "Suggestions for an Easter Program in the Form of a Latin Dramatization" (American Classical League Service Bureau Item 252, which sells for ten cents). "An Easter Pageant in Latin," by Lila Slagle, of the Central State Teachers College, Edmond, Okla. (Service Bureau Item 426, ten cents), contains staging directions for eight scenes, with appropriate Latin text for each scene. In all of these dramatizations the Latin is that of the Middle Ages rather than of the age of Cicero; but the English text of the Bible will help straighten out any difficulties that may arise. For the performances, musical composition may be used—Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, for instance, and old Latin hymns. (See J. C. Robert-

son's *Latin Songs New and Old*, American Classical League, forty cents.)

For an Easter program of a slightly different type—commemorating the Crucifixion rather than the Resurrection—the playlet "Thronus" may be used. It is written in very simple Latin, for a cast of six girls, and requires about ten minutes for production. The playlet appeared in *Auxilium Latinum* xi (Jan., 1939), No. 3-4, page 10. It may be obtained for twenty cents from Dr. A. E. Warsley, Box 54, Station "S," Brooklyn, N. Y.

Celebrating the Birthday of Rome

According to tradition, the city Rome was founded on the Palatine hill on the festival of the Parilia or Palilia (April 21), 753 B. C. In modern Rome the day is always commemorated with some form of celebration. Latin classes and clubs may be interested in observing the day with a special program, perhaps something like the following:—

1. The whole group sings a Latin song, perhaps from the textbook, perhaps from J. C. Robertson's *Latin Songs New and Old* (American Classical League Service Bureau, forty cents).

2. A pupil tells the legend of the founding of Rome, using material from a Latin or history textbook, or from a reference book in the library.

3. A pupil tells stories of some of the interesting characters in early Roman legend, e.g. the Sabine women, Mucius Scaevola, Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, Tarpeia, etc.

4. A pupil reads one of the stirring passages from Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. "Horatius" is especially good for this purpose.

5. The Latin teacher gives a short illustrated talk on "The Palatine Hill as It Looks Today," or on "The Hills of Rome."

6. The whole group sings another Latin song.

Or, if the group prefers, the program may be built around a playlet. Particularly timely for April 21 is "A Trip Through Roman History" (Service Bureau Item 551, ten cents), a burlesque skit in which the "history" is enacted offstage by means of "sound effects," as a reader explains it with mock solemnity.

A more ambitious club undertaking would be to enact a form of the shepherd-festival, the Parilia or Palilia. For this, the room is decorated with leaves, and an altar to the shepherd-divinity Pales is set up. Members come to the festival costumed as Roman shepherds. During the ceremony they pass through the smoke of burning incense, for purification, and the presiding priest sprinkles their heads with ashes. They then sit on the floor and hear the story of the founding of Rome. The story may even be presented in dramatic form, with students impersonating Romulus, Remus, and some of the first citizens of Rome. If the club has the good fortune to have members who are twins, certainly such an impersonation should be part of the program. The celebration concludes with refreshments of cake and milk, and a Latin song.

Student Compositions

Miss Adeline E. Reeping, of the Latrobe (Pa.) High School, seems to be getting excellent results by encouraging various forms of composition in connection with the work of her Latin classes. One of her students has undertaken to answer a derogatory article about Latin, written by a pupil in another high school. The answer will appear soon in *Scholastic*, a high school magazine. Her students have a Latin paper, which publishes original poems on classical themes, and original Latin stories. A correspondence in English between her students and Italian boys and girls studying English in Italy has proved most useful in helping the Latin students to visualize the places of which they read in their Latin texts. In com-

mon with many other Latin teachers, Miss Reeping supervises an exhibit of projects in the spring. The models shown are of the usual type, in the main, but this year they will include a scarf embroidered with the Lord's Prayer in Latin! Pictures of the projects are published in the school yearbook. In connection with the exhibit, Miss Reeping has hit upon the idea of asking each student to write a description and explanation of the function of his model, in Latin, and to make it so clear that the other students will all understand exactly what the model represents. Such "free composition" in Latin requires a tremendous amount of work on the part of the teacher, it is true, in the elimination of errors; but when carefully handled it is of inestimable value—L.B.L.

A PAN IN BRONZE

By KATHARINE HARRIET HERBER

Feura Bush, New York

We think to prison the subtle rhythm and line
Of savage splendor with the civil art;
Still we contrive to clothe with mortal design
Immortal flesh and limbs, and to impart
Human breath to gods who breathe the stars.
We grope with foolish fingers, seek to stay
The image of untamed grace, which wars
With bondage till our stone is less than clay.

Swift as the rush of wind on Arcadian hills,
Wild as the fawn that starts at its face in the pools,
Pan first breathed song in the reeds' unmusical quills,
Till men caught and held him in bronze moulded with tools.

But Pan is dead. Where now are the hollow, long
Notes of the horn? Where this soundless song?

BOOK NOTES

This Way and That. By H. Rackham. Pp. 120. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd. 1935. 3/6.

An illuminating glimpse of the skill of the British classicist in doing "translations into, and out of, Greek and Latin verse and prose" is furnished by this beautifully printed little volume. Written as an aid to classes in Greek and Latin composition, it will find its widest use in America among scholars who derive aesthetic enjoyment from well-written prose and verse. The authors translated include Milton, Shakespeare, Dryden, Darwin, Tennyson, Stephen Phillips, D'Aubigné; Simonides, Pallas, Aristotle; Horace, Vergil, Tiberianus.—L.B.L.

Everyday Life in Roman Britain. Written and illustrated by Marjory and C. H. B. Quennell. London: B. T. Batford Ltd., 15 North Audley St., 1937. Pp. ix + 124. 5 shillings.

A revised edition of this popular volume in a series which includes several volumes on Greece, has new illustrations and photographs as well as a new chapter entitled *The Flow and Ebb of Roman Conquest—Forts, Roads, and Towns*. The charming line drawings and colored illustrations which reconstruct the life of the Roman provincial help the student to visualize accurately towns, baths, the forum, the basilica, temples, houses, furniture, dishes and glass, shops, dress, soldiers, etc. The list could be extended almost endlessly. The text is clear, accurate, and readable. A good book for supplementing others on Roman private life.—D.P.L.

Pottery of the Ancients. By Helen E. Stiles. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1938. Pp. 128. \$2.50.

An externally beautiful, profusely illustrated book for children, presumably of the junior high school age-group. Young readers will probably learn much from the illustrations alone,

even if the somewhat uneven, sometimes confused, sometimes even misleading commentary be ignored. There is one chapter entitled "The Painted Vases of the Greeks," but including, surprisingly enough, a discussion of lamps, terra cotta statuettes, and unpainted pithoi. Cretan pottery gets a page under "Ceramic Art of Other Peoples," towards the end of the book. "Roman and Etruscan" pottery is lumped together in one page between the pottery of India and that of Turkey, and with it are included mosaic pavements! Other chapters are on Egyptian pottery, clay tablets, glazed bricks, lustered tiles, and Chinese porcelain.—L.B.L.

"Bradley's Arnold" Latin Prose Composition. Edited and revised with an appendix on continuous prose composition by J. F. Mountford. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938. Pp. xi + 443. \$2.00.

Perhaps the outstanding change in this revision of the famous book is the addition of 125 passages of connected English to be put into Latin. The subject matter of the passages is historical; the personalities involved range from Romulus to Grant and Lord Dalhousie. The supplementary exercises have been inserted in the appropriate lessons. A few sections have been re-written, and a few sentences re-worded. Spelling has been modernized, and the quantity of all long vowels has been marked. In the main, however, the general plan of the book and most of the sentences remain unchanged.—L.B.L.

Five Men—Character Studies From the Roman Empire. Martin Classical Lectures, Vol. VI. By Martin P. Charlesworth. Pp. viii + 170. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1936. \$2.00.

Five readable and scholarly lectures. The five types chosen for portrayal are: the native ruler; the philosopher; the adventurer; the administrator; and the merchant. In the high-school library, the book could be very useful for enrichment and background work.—L.B.L.

Two Roman Papers. By William G. Phelps. Pp. 16. Centenary College, Shreveport, La., 1939. 25c.

The "two papers" are entitled "The Grandeur That Was Rome," and "The Human Cicero," respectively. Very readable and interesting essays, directed to the high school or younger college student.—L.B.L.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

From all points of the compass reports are coming in of a growing interest in Latin and a renewed appreciation of its value on the part of the general public. From a small rural school in Elk Grove, Cal., comes Mr. Leroy Baird's report of a healthy and increasing enrollment in Latin, in spite of competition from Spanish. Professor Lillian G. Berry, of Indiana University, sends in copies of the Fort Wayne Sentinel containing an editorial strong in its advocacy of Latin, and an illustrated article commenting on the work of Miss Gertrude Ofpelt's students in the staging of a Roman banquet. Professor Berry sends also two issues of the school paper of the South Side High School, Fort Wayne, with "feature stories" on Roman themes, in approved journalistic form, by Miss Ofpelt's students. From Springfield, Mass., Mr. Charles P. Foley sends in an interview with Walter F. Downey, the new State Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts, as printed in the Boston Traveler. Commissioner Downey advocates Latin for all high school students, and Greek for many of them. From the Central Junior High School of Allentown, Pa., Miss Verna V. Ruth contributes the question asked of prominent men by the editors of the school magazine—"What do you think it takes to arrive at a commendable place in life?"—and Lowell Thomas' answer—"Master Latin and Greek."

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DOROTHY PARK LATTA, *Director*

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IV, 39. Catiline in the Senate.

IV, 48. Augustus (youthful picture).

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V, 1. Head of Jupiter.

V, 11. Mars in repose.

V, 12. Juno.

V, 25. The Trojan horse.

V, 31. A Lar.

V, 33. Aeneas leaving Troy and carrying his aged father.

Easter

252. Parts of a liturgical play in Latin from the tenth century. 10c.

426. An Easter pageant in Latin. Tableaux accompanied by the reading of Scriptures in Latin. 10c.

The Birthday of Rome

551. A trip through Roman history. A skit for the celebration of the birthday of Rome. 10c.